

Title: Ethical Hedonism: An Introduction

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Societies oft have common codes of conduct which it expects all its people to abide by. Now, while 'tis true that this can offer some advantages, most of the codes I see today around Britannia have fatal flaws. Let us examine them.

First, there is Blackthorn's code of Chaos or basically Anarchy. Whereas this affords the individual maximum opportunity for individuality and even pursuit of personal happiness, it does not offer even basic interpersonal conduct codes to prevent people from killing each other.

Without such basic tenets, all the people will need to spend a significant portion of their time and effort towards personal protection and thus less time towards other more beneficial pursuits.

Then there are the moral codes that are so popular today. These codes are built largely on historical tradition rather than current logic and thus are also antiquated. For example many moral codes we see today include

statements about not eating certain foods that once were often poisonous, but today can be prepared safely.

Many forbid contact between young people of the opposite gender, which can in fact be hazardous; but the codes often have lost the context as to why this is done, instead merely calling it amoral. In this day and age to call that a necessary moral would need a new reasoning. I put forth that tradition is not enough

Then there are Lord British's Virtues. It strikes me that while a system of virtues is wonderful as a touchstone to guide a society to good behavior, these are but shades of the underlying truth as to why one may wish to live a life according to certain rules of conduct.

On the other hand, clearly the Virtues that I have heard Lord British speak of are clearly positive codes of conduct, far better than the world of anarchy that Lord Blackthorn suggests. Yet, are not these Virtues still derived from a set of principles which though they sound good, are difficult to pin down as actual, undeniable, rational truths?

Worse yet though imagine a society who's code of

conduct was based on pure survival of the strongest. While this society may function and even accomplish much, it can be fairly argued that personal happiness would suffer greatly, except for those at the top. To rule that out, however, we must first believe that people have a right to pursue happiness.

I hope is a safe assumption that all beings wish to be happy; I will broadly describe this as Hedonism. Yet, if all people did live a life of hedonism, their hedonism might be in conflict with those near them, so I will use the term Ethics to describe limits one might put on one's hedonistic tendencies to allow others to pursue their happiness as well.

Allow me to give this example: If one were to live alone on a desert isle, one could live a life of pure hedonism, for no action one might take could interfere with another's right to pursue their happiness. Poison the lake if you like, there is no one to blame but yourself!

Now suppose two of you live on that island. Thou dost not want thy neighbor to feel free to poison the lake. Would it not be better to consider it unethical to poison the lake without first thinking of those

whose pursuit of happiness might be affected by this action?

I put forth that it is the fact that we as a people choose to live in groups known as a society that causes us to compromise our pure hedonism with logical ethics.

Likewise we accept not being able to kill others without reason, because our own pursuit of happiness would be greatly interfered with if we feared others would do the same to us. From this basis of logic can be formed the Tenets of Ethical Hedonism.

For more on this subject, see The Tenants of Ethical Hedonism, by Richard Garriott and Herman Miller.